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ABSTRACT

Several million aliens were given amnesty to become "New Americans" under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. Congress appropriated \$4 billion to provide education as well as health services for the eligible legalized aliens under the the State Legalized Immigrant Assistance Grant (SLIAG). A project at Los Angeles Mission College called the Bilingual Professional Expressway established a track for 2,000 immigrant professionals. The project was designed to mainstream "New Americans" into the American workforce and social fabric. The program includes a specialized matriculation process, self-paced accelerated English language instruction, detailed transcript evaluation, general education, assistance with university transfer and credentials or certification, and continuous support services through specially designed workshops and seminars. Preliminary findings on a sample of 14,000 Amnesty-eligible students revealed the following student characteristics: (1) they are 5% of California's population but 12% of the workforce; (2) 90% work more than 49 hours per week and earn \$11,440 per year; (3) 68% are married, and 80% have children; and (4) they have gotten very little education from SLIAG, averaging 9 hours of education per year over the 5-year funding period. (JMC)

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Los Angeles
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Educational Implications For Mainstreaming New Americans

Presented By: Jack Fujimoto, Ph.D.
April 7, 1992
CAPA-AAHE Presentation

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CAPA-AAHE PRESENTATION

**Session 2, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR MAINSTREAMING
NEW AMERICANS**

Tuesday, April 7, 1992, 9:40 am - 10:50 am

**Presenter: Jack Fujimoto, Ph.D., Los Angeles Mission College, Sylmar, CA
91342**

Description:

Several million aliens were given amnesty to become "New Americans" in 1986 when the Congress of the United States passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). Congress appropriated four billion dollars (\$4,000,000,000) to provide education as well as health services for the eligible legalized aliens (ELA). The appropriation is commonly known as the State Legalized Immigrant Assistance Grant (SLIAG).

The US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) mandated that forty (40) hours of instruction in American Government and the English language be provided for these "New Americans." From an educator's view, this policy appeared to be grossly inadequate in that it would only provide 'marginal' education and thus, add to the welfare burden of States. But, this group, in general, has made 'education' a high priority.

A FIPSE funded project at Los Angeles Mission College called the Bilingual Professional Expressway established a 'track' for 2,000 immigrant professionals, most of whom are amnesty recipients. They are mastering the English language, transferring to the university, and becoming licensed for work in their profession. The success of this project is resulting in a network of similar projects where the transition from high school to the university and profession is progressing nicely.

The project mainstreams "New Americans" into the productive American workforce and social fabric, much as when my parents (as immigrants in the 1910's) were finally accorded naturalization rights in 1952 (some 40 years later) through the Walter McCarren Immigration and Naturalization Act. Just as in 1952, educating the "New American" in the English language and citizenship has been essential; however, much more needs to be learned not only by those coming to the educational institution, but also, by those who teach these students. The educational implications to

mainstreaming the "New Americans" are enormous and varied. This lecture attempts to illustrate some of these issues through working with a special population, namely, immigrants.

PERSONAL COMMENTS.

Before making any comments on the subject listed for this session, permit me to make a few personal comments.

My intent is to provide primary evidence on the subject based on personal experience and survey data from primary sources rather than from research documents.

Many of you are more experienced or more learned than I on this topic and therefore, I hope that you will add to the lecture with your observations, experiences, and studies.

As many of you with the Caucus for Asian Pacific Americans (CAPA) know, I was not selected to give this lecture because I was an authority on the topic but because the Lecture Committee was running into a 'time crunch' and needed a 'fill in.' Being a 'pinch hitter' in an important 'ball game' is nothing new to me. So with that in mind, let us proceed!

INTRODUCTION

As we sit back in our chairs in an academic environment and

consider the 'weighty' problems surrounding our community as well as nation and moreover, as we reflect on the daily evidence of a steadily declining economy as well as a deteriorating social fabric, I, for one, ask 'why do foreigners want to immigrate to the USA?'

If you don't speak the English language, what future opportunities are there?

If you don't have a desirable skill for the American economy, what future income can you expect?

Can you earn enough to continue to send back to the 'home' country a part of your earnings so that you can, one day, return to that country and become prosperous there?

With the bureaucracies that currently exist in America, why try to cope with the American establishment so that you can immigrate?

These are some questions that come to mind as I contemplate the fact that there is a 'steady stream' of immigrants coming to the United States. Perhaps, this image is heightened by the fact that I have lived in the Southern California area all of my life, except for the World War II period, when I spent my life in an American concentration camp in Arizona.

Even in the 1990's, America is still the 'land of opportunity.' Prior to this time, America had been the dream of many where one could live the prosperous and happy life with freedom.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES ON THE IMMIGRANT ISSUE

My father, at the age of 14, came to California in 1915 through Angel Island in San Francisco. He came to join his father who had migrated to California in 1910 for the second time, the first time being in the 1890's to work on the Western Pacific Railroad.

My mother was born in Glendale, California, but was taken to Japan with her mother, at the age of 3, because her father passed away when the family lived in Hollywood. She returned to California in 1923, a year before the Japanese Exclusion Act of 1924.

At the time, the Alien Land Law precluded Japanese-Americans from purchasing real property even if they had the means. The miscegenation laws of California eliminated any possibility of a Japanese marrying a 'white' person as I soon learned when my uncle in 1934 wanted to marry a 'White Russian American Jew.' Furthermore, my parents could not become naturalized citizens to vote until 1952, when the Walter McCarren Naturalization Act was passed by the United States Congress.

This was my introduction to help immigrants become naturalized citizens. Having returned from the Korean Action in 1952 and becoming a student at UCLA, a fellow student and I became teachers of a class of Japanese interested in studying American Government. Having learned the Japanese language at the United States Defense Language Institute in

Monterey and having served as a language specialist, I was able to instruct the class in a bilingual mode. In reflection, this experience provided a rare opportunity to test and experience the impact of teaching in two languages as well as relating to experiences from two cultures.

Despite studies and degrees (BS, MBA, and Ph.D.) as well as many years of experience as an administrator of academic programs, I have retained my interest in working with the immigrant population. So, when the United States Congress, after considerable wrangling about the controlling the flow of immigrants to the United States, passed the Immigration Control Reform Act (IRCA) in 1986, it became evident that the 1,700,000 estimated 'future' citizens in California needed to be oriented, educated, and helped to become naturalized.

IMPLEMENTING THE ACT IN LOS ANGELES

Now, permit me to focus on IRCA. Depending upon how we, as adult school educators or community college educators, viewed this immigrant population, its educational needs, and its aspirations, little or nothing might have been done for them. Our community college Board of Trustees were concerned and wanted our colleges to become involved.

Historically, adult education in Los Angeles has been provided by the Unified School District (city schools) and the Community College District (community colleges). Adult basic education is the province of the Unified whereas community colleges are concerned with English as a Second

Language (ESL) and basic skills courses, primarily for college credit.

With the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) as the principal architect of regulations implementing IRCA, the educational component was a minimum 40 hours of study for American Government and the English language. Tied to that was a maximum annual charge of \$500 per amnesty applicant for their instruction, support services, as well as materials.

In the normal course of events, as you know, our typical three unit American Government course requires a minimum of 48 hours of instruction and according to the Carnegie Unit model, another 96 hours of assigned homework. Our typical five unit ESL class requires 80 hours of instruction followed with 160 hours of assigned homework. Immediately, it became evident that we would have considerable difficulty philosophically as well as fiscally in supporting a program of work within the regulations imposed by INS. Furthermore, in California, the assessment of educational levels of amnesty applicants was to be performed through an evaluation instrument developed by a contracted private vendor. As later events showed, the assessment instrument was delivered late and had shortcomings. Therefore, it was not used by many community colleges.

Even though these programmatic incongruities existed in 1987,

several community college administrators met and became a strong nucleus to design a plan to provide education to this amnesty population. This was the formation of the Southern California Community College Amnesty Network (SCCCAN). SCCCAN became an advocacy group for the educational needs of this amnesty population.

Meetings were scheduled with the California Department of Health and Welfare, the primary fiscal agency to receive Federal IRCA funds and allocate them to qualifying providers in the health services area as well as education. Meetings were also held with the educational service providers. Through 1991, 80% of the State Legalized Immigrant Assistance Grant (SLIAG) to California was funnelled to health providers and 20% to education providers. The primary education control agency has been the California Department of Education with community colleges and community-based organizations being reimbursed for services from that State agency.

Due to the complexity of working within the 'establishment' to meet the educational needs of the amnesty population, it soon became evident to many college presidents that the 'effort would not be worth it' and therefore, only slight support was given to advocate in meeting the needs of this population. The goals set forth, therefore, by SCCCAN were to be tackled with less college support than otherwise desired.

While adult schools were providing a basic 40 hours of instruction

through a traditional classroom approach or nontraditional approach using television, videocassettes, or home learning, and while community based organizations such as churches were starting their operations to accommodate amnesty educational needs, the SCCCAN community colleges embarked on developing curricula that was individualized to meet the amnesty applicant's needs and desires.

START UP ISSUES

Higher education's experiences with starting programs geared to large social issues such as Amnesty Education do not show in academic literature; therefore, for us, it was 'starting from scratch.'

Existing ESL courses were studied by curriculum specialists who were newly hired in many instances. Courses of study were modified to a noncredit status and a vertical linear linkage of ESL courses was articulated. These were eventually ladderred into traditional English credit courses.

New instructional materials had to be prepared. Contracts were let with instructional specialists who prepared study materials including syllabi and workbooks.

Tenured staff from traditional English and Reading disciplines were reassigned to teach ESL. Where experience in teaching ESL was needed, ESL certificate programs were developed with the university, and our

instructors enrolled while teaching the ever-growing numbers of Amnesty education students.

In instances, the employment of tenured faculty caused a program cost that exceeded the \$500 per person SLIAG funding. This was especially true in small sized classes, but, on the other hand, from a pedagogical view, large classes are not as effective. Some compromises had to be reached among those who authorized funds, the teaching faculty, its organized unions, support staff, and project administrators. A new position of Amnesty Education Director was created on many campuses to which temporary administrators were hired.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

1. ADVOCACY ISSUE.

With more colleges in the Los Angeles area becoming involved with serving the 1.7 million Amnesty eligibles, the SCCCAN organization became a larger advocacy group. It branched Statewide and in doing so, changed its logo and name to become more fitting of its member colleges, i.e., the Community College Educators of New Californians (CCENC). This organization has developed an identity within as well as outside of the California system of community colleges and among the many constituent bodies within California, namely Trustees, administrators, faculty and student groups.

2. FUNDING ISSUE.

Funding became a critical issue. Since funds were awarded on a reimbursement of cost basis, college Boards of Trustees as well as college Administration had to 'front load' those activities necessary to float the program before any funds were collected. It was soon recognized that 'front money' from SLIAG sources was necessary in order not to put an undue burden on the more traditional academic programs.

3. STAFFING ISSUE.

ESL teaching burdgeoned beyond expectations. However, fulltime ESL departments as well as fulltime ESL faculty were not immediately forthcoming. Tenured staff, in my opinion, were not willing to shift completely to ESL or take an early retirement so that ESL faculty could be hired.

4. ACCESS ISSUE.

Often, my observation was that the traditional academic control was to continue with those in traditional programs without any recognition for the upstart ESL curriculum. As many of you have witnessed even in your teaching, the student coming to the college scene appears to be less prepared in basic English language skills. A fundamental change was envisioned by many who were serving the immigrant Amnesty student that ESL courses, curricula and staffing would become a permanent part of the community college fabric. How wrong we have been!

BILINGUAL PROFESSIONAL EXPRESSWAY

Los Angeles Mission College undertook the education of Amnesty eligible students as early as 1987. ESL courses of a noncredit nature were offered with adjunct instructors.

Some preliminary findings on a sample size of 14,000 Amnesty eligible students revealed the following:

1. They are a significant part of today's California workforce. They are 5% of California's population but 12% of its workforce.
2. They are strongly committed to work, work hard, and yet have low income. 90% work more than 49 hours a week, and yet, earn \$11,440 per year compared to \$24,921 for all Californians.
3. They have strong family ties. 68% are married. 80% of them have children.
4. They are from a close-knit group.
5. They are concentrated in 10 counties in California.
6. They are relatively healthy.
7. They have healthy families.
8. They want education and citizenship.
9. They cannot find education or English learning opportunities.
10. They have gotten very little education from SLIAG. Each has averaged 9 hours of education per year over the five year funding period.

It soon became evident that the Amnesty Program students were distinct, specially because a large number were foreign-trained professionals. Therefore, a bilingual professional expressway project was created. This was designed to create an identification, matriculation, transfer, and placement process to assist immigrant professional teachers to integrate into the American job market in an effective manner. In 1989, a \$300,000 grant from the US Department of Education's Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) was awarded to Mission College to assist these immigrants become bilingual educators in our country.

The program includes a specialized matriculation process, self-paced accelerated English language instruction, detailed transcript evaluation, general education course completion, university transfer assistance, credential and certification assistance, and continuous support services through specially designed workshops and seminars.

In addition to the existing College ESL sequence of courses, a special ESL conversation class was created to improve the participant's English language communication skills. Another special class was designed to help the students understand the American educational system and provide information on networking strategies to locate and apply for jobs.

As a result of an intensive recruitment effort, more than 800 showed for the first meeting of the Bilingual Professional Expressway. More than 2000 foreign professionals have been aided by this project. Currently, there are 1,500 students enrolled in the project. 50% are from Mexico, another 30% from other Latin American countries, and the remaining professionals are from countries such as Thailand, China, Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Philippines, Spain and Sri Lanka.

Many hold doctorates from their countries. Degrees are concentrated in large part to the fields of Education, Engineering, Business Administration, Computer Science, and Allied Health areas.

Five community colleges, having networked with the FIPSE project at Mission College, now have their own professional network.

Additional bonuses from the project's thrusts include the development of partnerships among community, local schools, and universities. Many bilingual professionals are now working for the Los Angeles city schools as bilingual teachers. Others are volunteering their services as tutors as well as school monitors. Others are offering their services to community hospitals and health organizations while studying at Mission College to fulfill their language and majors requirements. A key element in the project's success has been the cooperative arrangement where the neighboring State University

guarantees entry when the student is prepared to transfer from Mission College.

As a result of the widespread support from the media, many professionals from different states in the United States as well as foreign countries have received information on the Expressway Project. This dissemination has increased the number of participants beyond the expectations of the project when first conceived by the Mission College academic administrative office.

IMPLICATIONS FROM MAINSTREAMING NEW AMERICANS

What can we, as educators, learn from these experiences that focused on the immigrants becoming 'New Americans?' What can we say about educating immigrants that could be transferable to any other special group to whom education is important, where family values are treasured, where there is motivation for improvement, and in families where several are in the family unit?

1. Program start up costs are high; therefore, administrative commitment is necessary.
2. Curricula needs to be examined and where lacking, should be created or purchased.
3. Staffing needs should be carefully assessed and met with those who are student-oriented and 'feed' on success.

4. The size of class or unit of instruction should be tailored to the facility, the delivery methodologies, as well as the assessed scores of the students.
5. Cooperative learning should be encouraged. In addition, networks of students, supporters, and authorities should be promoted.
6. High standards based on frequent evaluation are generally attainable through student-teacher interaction.
7. Dissemination of program success to media, community contacts, and educational institutions help in encouraging further success.

Los Angeles Mission College is a public community college primarily housed, until this year, in more than 30 store front locations. This year, it moved into new quarters. Its student enrollment jumped 35% to 7500 this past semester. 20% of this student enrollment continues to be Amnesty Program students who are benefitting from the Bilingual Professional Expressway. I believe that Mission College as well as its students have gained immensely from the Amnesty Program of immigrants and their networking to become better citizens and ultimately, 'New Americans.'

I have appreciated your invitation and attention. Until the next occasion where I can become another 'pinch hitter,' let us continue to work towards becoming better educators as our student clientele continues to change.

Have a good day!

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